

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: Marine Fish Culture

POLICY NUMBER: C-3611

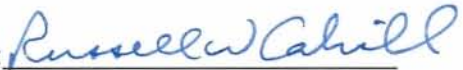
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Cancels: N/A

Effective Date: August 11, 2000

See Also: Policy C-3003

Approved By:



POL-C-3611 MARINE FISH CULTURE

PURPOSE

This policy applies to the use and application of marine fish culture.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will rely on natural production to meet marine fish conservation objectives unless a stock is designated as depleted and meets the conditions and constraints outlined under the terms of this policy.

1. The term stock means an interbreeding group of fishes and may refer to one or more distinct population segments.
2. The term marine fish means all saltwater fish excluding classified salmon (RCW 77.08.024), game fish (RCW 77.08.020), and sturgeon.
3. Management of natural production will proceed under the precautionary principle previously adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Policy C-3003, November 1996) and implemented in the Puget Sound Groundfish Management Plan (Palsson et. al., 1998).
4. Marine fishes may be cultured for three purposes:
 - a. for scientific research,
 - b. to develop hatchery methods in preparation for mass production to augment native marine fish stocks designated as depleted or approaching a status determination of depleted, and
 - c. for mass production to augment depleted native marine fish stocks.
5. Augmentation must be conducted so as to:
 - a. maintain genetic diversity displayed in the native stock,

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 - b. protect the effective population size of the native stock,
 - c. preserve ecological balance in the enhanced marine community, and
 - d. avoid negative impacts on the recovery of any state or federal species listed as threatened or endangered.

Release of cultured marine fish for a) experimental purposes, may only be directed at native marine fish species that are designated as depleted or approaching a status determination of depleted, and b) for augmentation purposes, may only be directed at native marine fish species that are designated as depleted.

1. Production level fish culture will be used to augment a depleted native marine fish stock only until the stock has recovered to the previously determined target population size, at which time augmentation will cease.
2. When multiple native marine fish stocks are simultaneously designated as depleted, the WDFW must prioritize candidate stocks for augmentation.
3. The WDFW will ensure that all SEPA guidelines are complied with prior to release of any cultured marine fish.
4. All permits issued by the WDFW involving release of cultured marine fish are subject to compliance with the terms and conditions of this policy.

Stock enhancement using cultured marine fish will be conducted under the umbrella of a Project Operational Plan.

1. Project Operational Plans dealing with the enhancement of depleted native marine fish stocks with cultured fish must be peer reviewed.
2. Project Operational Plans are required for all marine fish culture related research and production level projects prior to the release of any fishes.

Marine fish culture research, applied to marine fish species designated as depleted or approaching a designation of depleted, may be conducted to develop methods for:

- a. broodstock collection and maintenance,
- b. effective spawning techniques,
- c. rearing and holding of post-hatching larvae,
- d. optimal release strategies to ensure post-release survival to the spawning stock,

- e. assessment of techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of the release strategies, and
- f. other research as deemed essential for development of effective methods of mass production as approved under the terms of the Project Operational Plan.

The Department will provide the Fish and Wildlife Commission a minimum of biennial reports on the status of depleted marine fish stocks and their progress towards recovery.